

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4-11, 18-21, 24 and 26 stand rejected. The Examiner is thanked for indicating the allowability of claims 2-3, 12-17, 22-23 and 25. Claims 1, 11, 19, 23-24 and 26 have been amended. In view of the following, all rejected claims are in condition for allowance.

Objection to Drawings

The drawings stand objected to. As illustrated in the replacement sheets submitted herewith, the drawings have been amended to correct the defects cited by the Examiner. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw these objections.

Rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 8-11, 18-21, 24 and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) As Being Anticipated By Thompson

Claim 1

Claim 1 as amended recites retrieving a mission module with a vessel, the vessel operable to transport passengers from a first terrestrial location to a second terrestrial location, the module operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel.

For example, referring, *e.g.*, to FIGS. 1 and 2 and paragraphs 16-24 of the present application, a ship (vessel operable to transport passengers from a first terrestrial location to a second terrestrial location) 100 includes a hull structure or frame 115 that is designed to accept one or more mission modules 105. Mission modules 105 are designed with different capabilities that, when interfaced with the ship 100, provide the ship 100 with mission-specific functionality for respective types of missions. For example, the mission module 105 may enhance the non-module, *i.e.*, permanent, resources of the ship 100 for compatibility with the type of mission(s) for which the module is designed. Consequently, the ship 100 may include a general operator/control station, which the computer system of the module 105 can configure for the corresponding type of mission via an interface with the ship's computer system. Or, the module 105 may carry extra fuel and supplies for a long range mission.

Thompson, on the other hand, fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 1. For example, Thompson, at, e.g., FIG. 3 and col. 4, lines 31-40, teaches a modular system 8 attached to a manned orbiting space station 30. The modular system 8 is preferably lifted into orbit utilizing an NSTS Orbiter 32, and attached to the manned orbiting space station 30 using a remote manipulating system of the NSTS Orbiter 32. Specifically, the berthing mechanism 22 located on the front endcap 14 of the modular system 8 is mated with a berthing mechanism or docking module 31 of the manned orbiting space station 30, thereby allowing the modular system 8 to become an integrated module of the orbiting space station 30. However, there is no indication that the station is operable to transport passengers from a first terrestrial location to a second terrestrial location. There is also no indication that the system 8 is installed in and operable to influence non-module resources of the Orbiter 32.

Claims 11, 19, 24 and 26

Claims 11, 19, 24 and 26 are patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in connection with claim 1.

Claims 2-10, 12-18, 20-23 and 25

Claims 2-10, 12-18, 20-23 and 25 are patentable by virtue of their respective dependencies from claims 1, 11, 19 and 24.

Rejection of Claims 1, 7 and 19 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) As Being Anticipated By Cushing

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites retrieving a mission module with a vessel, the installed module operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel.

In contrast, Cushing fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 1. For example, Cushing, at, e.g., FIGS. 1-2 and the abstract, teaches a portable power supply

(which the Examiner regards as a mission module) for providing electrical service to cargo storage containers stowed on a ship (vessel) deck. However, there is no indication in Cushing that the ship in any manner retrieves the portable power supplies.

Claim 7

Claim 7 is patentable by virtue of its dependency from claim 1.

Claim 19

Claim 19 as amended recites disengaging a mission module from a vessel, the mission module located in a bay of the vessel and operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel.

In contrast, Cushing discloses engaging the power supply with and disengaging the power supply from cargo storage containers stowed on a ship. However, Cushing fails to teach or suggest engaging the power supply with or disengaging the power supply from the ship itself.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-26 are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 425.455.5575. **The Applicant's attorney respectfully requests the Examiner to telephone the undersigned prior to issuing an Office Action that rejects any pending claim in this case.**

In the event additional fees are due as a result of this amendment, you are hereby authorized to charge such payment to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 13, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.G. Scott Born', written over a horizontal line.

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Enclosure: Drawing Replacement Sheets